

THE BUILDER,

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It is most consolatory to us, in that course of enlarged experience which the exercise of this our vocation has called us into, to find so many evidences of the right selection of the period we have chosen, and so many circumstances in agreement with our intentions, presenting themselves on every side. Nothing but the standing in the position in which we do could enable us to form a correct estimate of the real state of feeling of the different parties in the community towards each other; by placing ourselves midway between the employers and the workmen, between the privileged and wealthy classes and those who have to labour for their competence, we are enabled to test in a great measure the disposition of each, and it is a great happiness to us to find that the good opinion we had previously entertained of, both is being strengthened and corroborated. We are convinced that the wealthy and the working classes only want to be brought to a better knowledge of each other, to revive the old feeling of good fellowship which formerly existed between them. But the barrier of the middleman, or of that class of middlemen, whose only feeling seemed to be for self, caring not one groat for, nor sympathising on a title with, the two great classes whom his intervention separated,—this barrier, and the false interpretations which it promoted, had threatened to alienate the two great dependent interests, and the working man was becoming estranged from his natural leaders and protectors.

To have listened to the auguries between them, one would have thought that a cordial bête existed, instead of a sincere affection; but what do we find to be the case? The gentry and clergy, on the one hand, exhibiting the greatest zeal and interest in the condition of the working classes, and the working classes eagerly responding to them in a spirit of grateful, yet manly fidelity on the other. Witness of the first, the efforts now being made to turn attention to the improvement of the labourers' dwellings—but, above all, that sweeping down of distinctions in places of worship; hitherto it has only been at elections, and in the betting-ring, that it was said all distinctions were levelled, but now we see the lovelier influence of art instrumental in opening a worthier field; the discussion of correct principles of church architecture has led to a sequence of proprieties as to the occupation of our churches, and the doom of the system of separation and exclusion is sealed; pews and select places are to be abolished, the rich and the poor are to be equal brethren before the altar. Depend upon it, this will be followed by a practical brotherhood out of doors; but we need go no further than to the evidence which our own working has produced—the letters that we have received from all classes breathe the most generous and friendly spirit, and simply because we have set up an organ for the advocacy of the just interests of all classes: the rich admire it for the sake of the poor; the poor cling to it because it exhibits their virtues to those above them, and shows how worthy they are of affection and confidence.

Another subject for congratulation, with us in the growing taste for a style in Art, which promises to provide abundant employment

for our increasing population, and removes from us the fear that infected many as to the threatened inroads upon the labour province; it is for us to cultivate it, and by so doing to solve a problem which statesmen and political economists are at fault in, or beaten with. Public opinion, it has been said, is omnipotent, and public opinion in matters of taste will of a truth be found to be so; let that opinion and that taste be moulded into the channels of variety and originality in ornament, and we have a guarantee of an extension of the field of labour to an incalculable amount. We have lately looked on the new Catholic Church of St. George's Fields, building under Mr. Pugin, and our gratification has been excessive to witness the beauty and variety, yet perfect affinity of every bay of the exterior side of the chancel. Every window differs in the line, though harmonising in the expression of its tracery, and the exquisite perforated parapet is regulated in the same manner. Let but this taste prevail, let each compartment of a building, and each building, present this feature of unique varieties, and art and artists have nothing to fear. Then, in the painting of our edifices, public and private, in the staining of glass, the frescoes, the carvings, the encaustic tiles, mosaics, why are not all these to be pursued and cultivated as of old? They are to be so; and we direct the attention of every youth, and every artisan with the hope of days left in him, we direct them to this, and implore them to make a timely and an earnest application of their faculties in preparation for the forthcoming change.

We think it of great importance to our readers to call their attention to an invaluable means of their attaining that proficiency as draughtsmen, designers, and modellers which the spirit of our preceding remark points out the necessity of. For many years it has been the reproach of this country that so little was done under the auspices of government for the promotion of the arts of design as applicable to the decoration of buildings and to our manufactures. At length, however, the British Government has set about it in right earnest, and in a spirit of liberality that contrasts most extraordinarily with its former apathy and exclusiveness. We were at the Somerset House School of Design yesterday, and it is really most exhilarating to see that which is now placed at the disposal of the youth of our country, to enable them to pursue the study of the art of Design, and acquire a skill in artistic delineations and in modelling. A large and noble suite of rooms is set apart for their use; it is crowded with objects of instruction—casts and designs; and already, we understand, some 300 pupils, boys and young men, under the training and superintendence of first-rate masters, are availing themselves of these unheard-of advantages at the rate of 4s. per month, for five hours in every day except Saturday, which is four hours, and at 2s. per month for the evening classes; but the morning pupils have the privilege for the 4s. payment of attending the evening classes as well!—A council of gentlemen, eminent for their professional and amateur taste, preside over this great and important school, assisted by Mr. Dyce, the professor of architectural embellishments to King's College.

Now, we tell every young man who has the opportunity, and who requires to know any thing of the arts taught here, that he is guilty of a gross injustice to himself, and is most criminally negligent of his own interests, if

unable to procure it by other means, he neglect this noble opportunity. Branch schools have been already established in York, Nottingham, and Sheffield, we believe, and are intended for several other cities and towns, and we enjoin upon the inhabitants of all those places where the chance is vouchsafed to them: of having these branch schools, to bestir themselves to secure for their youths the immense advantages which these institutions are calculated to secure to them. We shall enter into further particulars at our first lecture, and, so far as the facilities may be accorded to us, will give the most practical information for our friends and readers.

MOST IMPORTANT INVENTION AS AFFECTING ARCHITECTURE.

We gave, in a former number, a paragraph respecting the new method of galvanising iron, in other words, protecting it from rust; we now resume the subject; and we beg to call the attention of our readers, in the most impressive terms we can command, to this grand revolutionising agent in the matter of style in architecture. Thank God! we may say, we have no style, and therefore nothing to be knocked down by it; a revolution, therefore, under such circumstances, is not to be dreaded. For three centuries we have been sitting about, reviving old styles, but settling upon none, as indeed was certain to be the result, for nations do not make steps in retrogression. The Greek and the Gothic had been worn out, and various compounds had been tried, and compounds upon compounds; a premium offered for a new style, or a new order of architecture, as it is termed; various abortions have been produced, all failing, because of the misdirection of men's ingenuity, seeking to re-work a principle that had been fairly exhausted, and forgetting, or it never occurring to them, that the creative origin of all styles has to be sought for in other elements than mere reproductions. The horizontal structure and style in marble and stone had been carried to its boundaries by classic nations; the arch had grown out of it, and through all the phases of human ingenuity had run its existence, from the acutest point of the lancet to the most depressed oblique of the Tudor era; and even to the horizontal listel again, as though extremes had met after ages of wanderings, and confessed an end of their respective cycles. Marble, stone, brick, timber had done ample service to both styles, in the respective modes of applying these materials; but iron, the deep-drawn product of a new quarry, to England what Pœtelicus was to Greece, and Carrara to Italy, and what her own ancient forests of timber and surface quarries of stone were to her,—iron, from its deep embowellings, with its kindred and associate tributary, coal; these, under the guidance of new workings of chemical and mechanical science, have been evoked to create, as it were, a new world, another hemisphere of art, and all the forms, essentials, and characteristics of the old world and its products become inapplicable, or only so far applicable as to serve as a basis of knowledge and a groundwork of principles. The mode, manner, or fashion is destined to a change as signal as ever marked an era—the transition has been nearly run through, and that one of chaotic and versatile imaginings or imitations. But for a little time longer shall we be doomed to hear of the Greek, Roman, or Gothic style in modern buildings—it is a solecism in expression. In England, at least, we shall hear of what we ought to hear, an English style, or more reasonably still, we may not hear of style at all. Who asks for a definition of that which defines itself? Adapt your buildings, as the ancients did, to the object or convenience required, to the locality in which they are situated, and to the materials with which you are provided, and, like them, you will not be asking what style they are in. Think you that the subjects of our first Edward troubled their heads with antecedent style? or with any denomination of their own? No; they would as soon have engaged in building a medley of all styles and eras, as we are doing—running through our copyisms in some quarter of a century, raging vehemently in turns for this or